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BICYCLIST'S HANDBOOK

A Guide for Young Drivers



INTRODUCTION

This booklet shows and tells you, as a young cyclist, how to get the most out of your bicycle for fun, health and transportation.

Read this handbook carefully and understand its contents. Then put what you have learned into action.

Through the proper use of your bicycle and by obeying the rules of the road, you'll help yourself and contribute to safety on the roads.

Go safely!

All cyclists are required by law to wear an approved helmet as of October 1, 1995.

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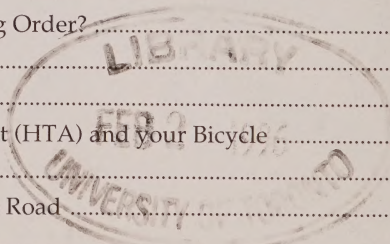
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DRIVING A BIKE'S EASY!



Sure it is. Once you learn to drive one, they say you never forget how.

First of all, protect yourself by always wearing an approved helmet. For extra safety, wear bright clothing so you'll be more visible.

Make sure your bike "fits" you. Remember, the size of your bicycle affects your ability to steer, pedal and use your brakes. A bicycle that fits properly is easy to control, comfortable to ride and doesn't hurt your knees.

To check that your bike is the right size, stand flat-footed over your bicycle. Your crotch should be above the frame.

Check your seat height. When you sit on the saddle with your heels on the pedals, your legs should be almost straight at the bottom of the pedal stroke.

Driving a bike - and doing it safely - takes practice.

Practice with your bicycle before you take it out on a busy street. A good, safe place is in a vacant parking lot or school playground.

Drive defensively. Remember, you're driving one of the smallest vehicles on the road. It's not always easy for other drivers to see you.

You should drive on the same side of the street as traffic going the same way. If you're moving slower than the other vehicles around you, drive in the right lane beside the curb. Stay about one metre from the curb to avoid sewer grates and bumps. Always drive straight, without swerving and stay in single file.

As the driver of a vehicle, you should know the rules of the road. Remember, you **MUST** follow these rules just like the drivers of other vehicles.

IS YOUR BICYCLE IN SAFE WORKING ORDER?

Before driving your bicycle, make sure it's in good condition...regular check-ups can help prevent the possibility of a spill or accident. Remember, all bike parts must be firmly attached.

Here's a list of things to check and an easy way to test each part to make sure it is tight before riding.

1. **Seat Adjustment:**

Twist the seat in all directions. If the seat is not properly adjusted, you can't drive safely. If your seat is not at the proper height, it can cause you strain and you'll get tired quickly. Too low or too high, you lose pumping power.

2. **Steering:**

Push down on the handlebars. Put the front wheel between your knees and twist the handlebars. Keep handlebars straight, tight and at the right height. Keep handlebar nuts tight. Make sure grips are snug.

3. **Wheels:**

Check for bent or missing spokes. Wheels won't run smoothly if all spokes aren't tight and in position. Spin the tire and if it has a large wobble in it, then it is out of alignment. Keep axle nuts tight.

4. **Brakes:**

- (a) **Brake Lever attachment:** Check that it is tightly secured to the handlebars and the brake cable is in good condition.
- (b) **Front Brake:** Squeeze front brake as hard as possible. Try and push the bike forward. The rear wheel should lift off the ground. There should be 25 mm (1") between the brake lever and the handlebar.



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- (c) **Rear Brake:** Squeeze the rear brake as hard as possible. Try and push the bike forward. The rear wheel should skid. There should be 25 mm (1") between the brake lever and the handlebar.
 - (d) **Brake Pads:** Check that they are all parallel to the wheel rims and only touch the metal part of the wheel. Keep your brakes properly adjusted. They are just as important on your bicycle as on a car.

5. Tires: Check for cuts and bruises. Keep pressure up. Your tire should be firm when you press it with your thumb. Don't drive with bald tires. You'll have poor traction and slow stopping when you use the brakes.

6. Chain: It should be cleaned and oiled regularly. Remember, it connects the source of power (you pushing the pedals) with the sprockets that provide the 'drive'. Check for weak links. Keep proper tension. About 2 cm (3/4") up-and-down movement is correct.

7. Pedals: They should be tight. Use light machine oil if lubrication is needed.

8. Lights and reflectors: For night driving, you must have a white or amber front light, a red reflector or light on the rear. Check that the lights are in good working order and your battery is fully charged. Make sure your rear light or reflector is securely fastened.

9. Bell: The law requires you to have a bell or horn. It must be loud and clear.

10. Parcel carrier: Make sure it is tightly secured.

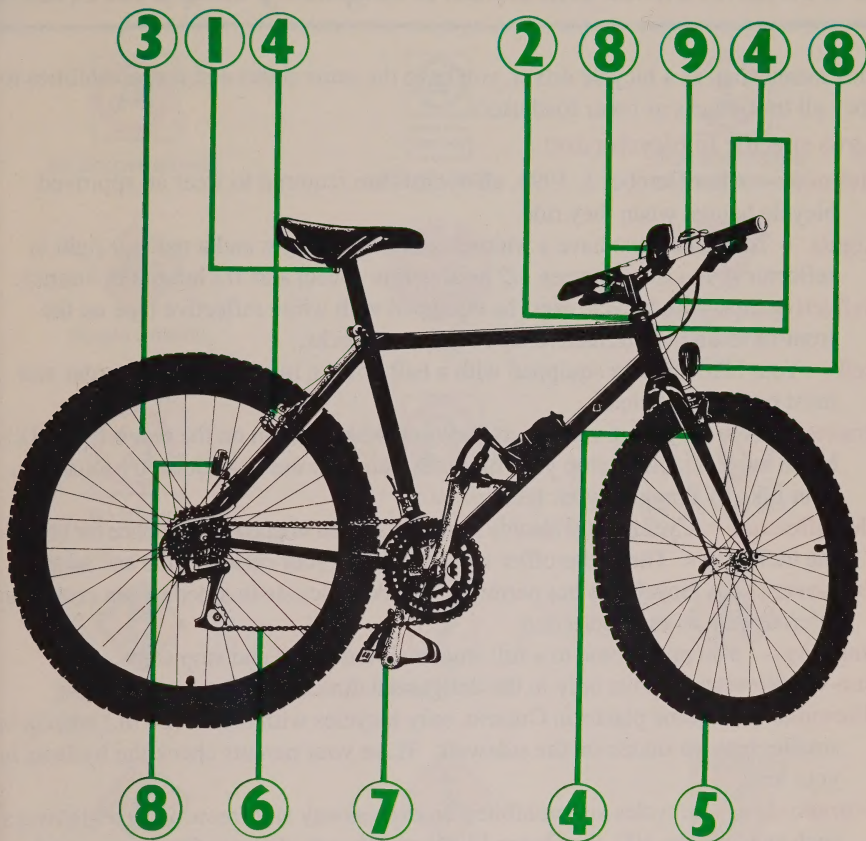
BMX



- (1) Seat Adjustment
- (2) Steering
- (3) Wheels
- (4) Brakes
- (5) Tires

- (6) Chain
- (7) Pedals
- (8) Reflectors
- (9) Bell

MOUNTAIN



(1) Seat Adjustment

(2) Steering

(3) Wheels

(4) Brakes Levers/Pads/Cables

(5) Tires

(6) Chain

(7) Pedals

(8) Headlight,
taillight, reflector

(9) Bell

how to check each part illustrated.

YOUR BICYCLE....

Is a vehicle, under The Ontario Highway Traffic Act (HTA)

This means that, as a bicycle driver, you have the same rights and responsibilities to obey all traffic laws as other road users.

Laws specific to bicycles are:

Helmets — After October 1, 1995, all cyclists are required to wear an approved bicycle helmet when they ride.

Lights — Your bike must have a white or amber front light and a red rear light or reflector if you ride between 1/2 hour before sunset and 1/2 hour after sunrise.

Reflective tape — A bicycle must be equipped with white reflective tape on the front forks and red reflective tape on the rear forks.

Bell — Your bike must be equipped with a bell or horn in good working order and must be loud and clear.

Brakes — Your bicycle must have at least one brake system on the rear wheel. This brake must be able to stop your bike. Be sure you use it — don't try to stop your bike by dragging your feet.

Identification — Cyclists must identify themselves when stopped by the police for breaking traffic laws. The police officer will ask you for your correct name and address.

Crossovers — A bicyclist is not permitted to ride a bicycle in a pedestrian crossover or crosswalk at an intersection.

Stopping — You must come to a full stop at all red lights and stop signs.

One-way streets — Drive only in the designated direction on a one-way street.

Sidewalks — In some places in Ontario, only bicycles with 61 cm (24 in.) wheels or smaller may be ridden on the sidewalk. Have your parents check the by-laws in your area.

Expressways — Bicycles are prohibited on expressway and freeway-type highways such as Highway 400, the Queen Elizabeth Way, the Ottawa Queensway and on roads where "No bicycle" signs are posted.

Passengers — No passengers are allowed on a bicycle designed for one person.

Attaching to a vehicle — You are not permitted to attach yourself to the outside of another vehicle or streetcar for the purpose of "hitching a ride".

Dismounted bicyclist — As a bicyclist, you are required to ride your bicycle on the right-hand side of the road. If you are walking your bike on a highway where there are no sidewalks, you are considered a pedestrian and you should be walking on the left-hand side of the road facing traffic. However, if it is not safe for you to cross the road to face traffic, you are permitted to walk your bike on the right-hand side of the road.

LEARN THESE TRAFFIC SIGNS - YOU MUST OBEY THEM!



No bicycles allowed.



Bicycle route.



No pedestrians or
bicycles allowed.



Bicycle crossing.



Stop.



Yield right-of-way.
Be prepared to stop
if necessary.



No left turn.



No U turn.



No right turn.



Traffic signals ahead.



Pass to the right.



Road narrows ahead.



Bend or curve
in the road ahead.



Two lanes of traffic
are about to join
into one. Merge
smoothly.



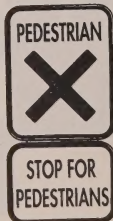
Squeeze right.



Traffic may travel in
one direction only.



Railway crossing.



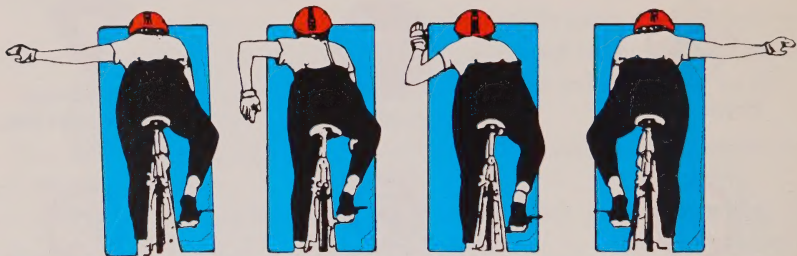
Pedestrian crossover.

KNOW AND OBEY THE

SIGNALLING

You must signal before turning, changing lanes, stopping or slowing down.

Before you turn or change lanes, look back at traffic to determine if it is safe. Use hand signals to warn other road users of your intentions. Cyclists now have the option of putting out their right arm to signal a right turn.

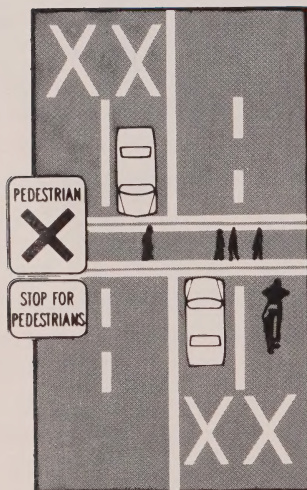


Left

Stop

Right

Alternative Right



RIGHT-OF-WAY

At intersections where there are no lights or traffic signs, yield the right-of-way to traffic approaching from the right. At intersections with stop signs, come to a full stop. Wait until the way is clear of vehicles and pedestrians before going through. Remember, pedestrians using the intersection have the right-of-way. When you're coming out of a driveway, yield the right-of-way.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSOVERS

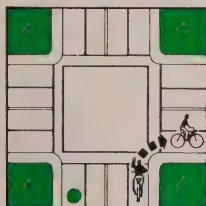
Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians in the crossover. Slow down and stop if necessary. Don't forget, you are not permitted to ride your bicycle within a pedestrian crossover. You must dismount and walk your bike across.

RULES OF THE ROAD

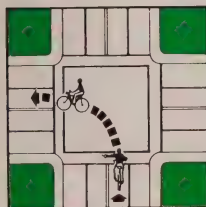
TURNING

A bicycle is one of the smallest vehicles on the road. Making a turn at a busy intersection is very hazardous because it is difficult for motorists to see you. Always check the vehicles around you and be especially careful of vehicles making a right-hand turn. Drivers coming up to an intersection don't always see cyclists. Watch for vehicles that might turn across your path when they are changing lanes.

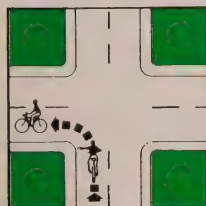
If you are a new bike driver, or find yourself nervous making a left-hand turn in traffic at a busy intersection, get off your bike, walk left across the intersection. At the far side, again walk across the intersection, then turn your bike and continue on in the right-hand lane.



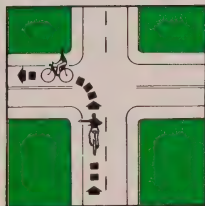
RIGHT TURNS



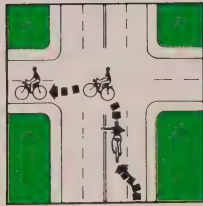
LEFT TURNS



1-way to
1-way



1-way to
2-way



2-way to
1-way

Don't decide to turn at the last minute. Check traffic, signal and move into the proper lane.

Signal your turn well ahead of the turning point and hold the signal until you are ready to start the turn. Put both hands on the handlebars when making the turn.

Complete your turn in the proper lane.

A BICYCLE DRIVER'S SAFETY RULES

Get to know these rules and follow them at all times. Remember, it's very important to learn about traffic now when you are a cyclist. Soon you will be a motorist – and you'll be a better driver then if you learn the rules now.

- 1. Be protected.**
Always wear an approved bicycle helmet. A serious head injury can happen with just a spill from your bike.
- 2. Be visible.**
Smart cyclists make themselves easy to see. If you're out after dark or in fog or rain, make sure motorists can see you. Use the light, reflector and reflective tape required by law. Wear light or bright colours like red, white or yellow.
Put an extra bit of reflective tape on the pedals.
Wear reflective bands on your wrists and ankles or on the front and back of your jacket.
- 3. Obey all traffic signs and signals.**
The signs and signals on pages 7 and 12 are posted to protect your life – and the lives of others. They must be obeyed.
- 4. Drive on the right-hand side of the road.**
Remember – you must not drive in the middle of the road, or on the left-hand side, or weave your bike from side to side. Drive on the right always and be very careful when you pass parked cars. Thoughtless motorists sometimes open doors on the traffic side, right in your path. Be alert.
- 5. Ride single file on the street.**
Always drive one behind the other. Do not follow too closely. Keep at least one bike length behind the cyclist ahead. This gives you space to brake and stop in an emergency without causing a rear-end collision.
- 6. Be sure to give the correct hand signal when you are going to stop, turn, or change lanes.**
Get to know the correct hand signals, as shown on page 8.





- 7. Stop before driving into the street from your driveway or a lane.**
Motorists may not have time to see you if you pop out onto the street suddenly. Dismount and walk your bike into the street. Then mount if traffic permits and drive away.
- 8. Walk your bike at busy corners.**
It's impossible to see in all directions at once. Traffic is tricky at corners, so the safest thing to do is to dismount and walk your bike across with the pedestrians.
- 9. Be alert for vehicles about to pass you.**
Drive as far over to the right as you can, to allow other vehicles to pass you safely. If you are about to turn, check traffic in all directions, especially behind you. Make your signal, then turn when it's safe to do so.
- 10. Never ride two on a bicycle.**
Unless you have a tandem (a bicycle built for two) your bike was built to carry only one person. Never carry a passenger on the handlebars, crossbar or seat.
- 11. Never hitch a ride on another vehicle.**
Don't "hitch" a ride hanging on the side of a truck. It's not only against the law, you can get hurt or killed very easily doing this.
- 12. No "trick riding" on the streets or highways.**
Trick riding on the streets, roads or highways isn't smart - it's dumb. Good cyclists don't have to show off.
- 13. Your bike must be in good working order.**
Just as brakes, lights and tires must be in good condition on a car, so must they be on a bicycle. Check your chain too. If you're proud of your bike, you'll keep it washed, polished and well-oiled.
- 14. Carry parcels and books in your carrier.**
Good car drivers keep both hands on the wheel. Good cyclists keep both hands on the handlebars. You can't do that if you've got an armful of books or a bag of groceries. So put things in your carrier. Don't carry anything on your handlebars - you will lose steering control.
- 15. Lock your bicycle.**
When leaving your bicycle in a school yard, shopping plaza or other location, make sure you lock your bicycle to avoid it being stolen. Secure it with a "D" lock to a lamp post or other stable structure. Remember, lock it, or lose it!

WATCH FOR TRAFFIC SIGNAL LIGHTS



RED

Means bicyclists must bring their vehicles to a stop. You must stop at the clearly-marked stop line. If there isn't one, stop at the nearest crosswalk.

Wait until the signal changes to green before going through the intersection.

Unless a sign is posted saying you can't, a right turn may be made on a red signal. You must bring your bicycle to a full stop. Pedestrians crossing the street and other traffic have the right-of-way.



FLASHING RED

Means you must bring your bike to a full stop and go only when it is safe to do so. Look in all directions before going on.



YELLOW

Means that a red light is about to come on. You must come to a full stop unless you cannot stop safely. If it is not safe to stop, look all ways before going through the intersection.



FLASHING YELLOW

Means slow down and go with caution.



GREEN

Means you may go if the way is clear. When turning on a green light, remember, pedestrians crossing with the green light have the right-of-way.



FLASHING GREEN


Means vehicles, including bicycles, facing the light may go through, turn left, or right.



FLASHING GREEN ARROW

Means you may enter the intersection and go only in the direction shown by the arrow. Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians and other traffic using the intersection.

Road Safety



**It starts
with you**

Cette publication existe aussi en français.

